

## Chapter Charter: Questions to Guide Your Reading



The following questions will help you think about the important parts of each chapter.

### **Prologue**

- How does the author describe the setting in this section?
- Why do you think she chooses to be so mysterious in the prologue?

### **Chapter 1**

- How does the author's use of language help you to understand the setting?
- Why aren't the Fosters curious about the wood? If you were Winnie, do you think you might have wanted to explore the wood? Why or why not?

### **Chapter 2**

- Why does Angus Tuck consider his dream about heaven a "good dream"?
- Why do you think Mae Tuck doesn't care about her appearance anymore?

### **Chapter 3**

- What do you think Winnie's life is like? How does it compare to your life?

- Why does Winnie throw stones at the toad? What emotion do you think she is feeling?
- Why does Winnie tell the toad she wants to run away?

#### **Chapter 4**

- What is your first impression of the man in the yellow suit? Does the author give you any clues about his character?
- Where do you think the music that Winnie's grandmother hears comes from?

#### **Chapter 5**

- What do you think Jesse is thinking when he tries to prevent Winnie from drinking the spring water?
- What does Mae mean when she says, "The worst is happening at last"?

#### **Chapter 6**

- Why do the Tucks kidnap Winnie? What do you think you would have done in Winnie's place?
- Why does Winnie feel reassured when she hears the music box?

#### **Chapter 7**

- How had the Tucks figured out they were going to live forever?
- Why do you think the man in the yellow suit is following Winnie and the Tucks?

#### **Chapter 8**

- Why does Winnie begin to feel happy about being with the Tucks?

- The man in the yellow suit overhears the Tucks' story. What do you think he might be planning?

### **Chapter 9**

- It takes many hours for Winnie, Mae, Jesse, and Miles to reach the Tucks' home. Why do you think they live in such a hard-to-reach place?
- Why do you think Angus Tuck is so happy to meet Winnie?

### **Chapter 10**

- Do you think Mae thinks of her life as blessed or cursed? Why?
- Why is Winnie so amazed at the inside of the Tucks' home?

### **Chapter 11**

- Why does Winnie suddenly want to go home?

### **Chapter 12**

- Why does Angus Tuck take Winnie to the pond to talk to her?
- How is the movement of the pond water meaningful to their conversation about the life cycle?

### **Chapter 13**

- Why do you think the man in the yellow suit goes to the Fosters instead of to the police?

### **Chapter 14**

- Why does Winnie go back and forth, first liking the disorder of the Tucks' lifestyle, then longing for her regular bedtime routine?
- How do the Tucks make Winnie feel better?

- As Winnie tries to fall asleep, she can't decide whether or not to believe the Tucks' story. Would you have believed it? Why or why not?

### **Chapter 15**

- Why do you think the man in the yellow suit wants to trade his knowledge of Winnie's whereabouts for the Fosters' wood?
- What do the man in the yellow suit's actions tell you about his character?

### **Chapter 16**

- Why is the constable surprised that the Fosters agree to sell the wood?
- Is the constable suspicious of the man in the yellow suit's motives?

### **Chapter 17**

- How does swatting a mosquito make Winnie realize that dying is a natural part of the life cycle?
- Why does Winnie insist that Miles throw the fish back?

### **Chapter 18**

- Why do you think Miles conceals the reason that he and Winnie return without any fish?
- How have Winnie's feelings for the Tucks changed? Do you think she has stronger feelings for some of the Tucks than others?

## **Chapter 19**

- Why does the man in the yellow suit see the Tucks as selfish?
- Mae Tuck hits the man over the head with the gun. Do you think she does the right thing? Does she have another option?

## **Chapter 20**

- Why does Winnie lie to the constable?
- Angus Tuck stares at the man in the yellow suit after Mae hits him. What do you think he is thinking about? Why does Winnie seem horrified at Angus Tuck's reaction?

## **Chapter 21**

- Do you think the Fosters regret selling the wood?
- What makes Winnie's family think she has changed?

## **Chapter 22**

- Why does Winnie volunteer to help rescue Mae?
- Do you think Jesse should have given Winnie the spring water? Why or why not?

## **Chapter 23**

- Why does being disheveled make Winnie's mother and grandmother more interesting?
- Why does Winnie feel so good and right about what she is about to do?

## **Chapter 24**

- How do you think Winnie feels helping Mae escape?
- Do you think Winnie does the right thing in freeing Mae? Why?

## **Chapter 25**

- How does Winnie's reputation in the village change after she helps Mae?
- Why do you think Winnie saves the toad from the dog?
- What important decision does Winnie make when she pours the spring water on the toad?

## **Epilogue**

- How does the author connect Winnie and the Tucks at the end of the story?
- Why does Angus Tuck say, "Good girl," when he sees Winnie's grave?

## Plot: What's Happening?



"Life's got to be lived, no matter how long or short...."

—Mae Tuck, *Tuck Everlasting*

**T**uck *Everlasting* is the story of a young girl named Winnie whose life in the small town of Treegap turns magical when she explores the wood in search of adventure and independence. At the beginning of this novella, or short novel, Winnie Foster is bored. She wants something interesting to happen to her. Winnie looks to a toad in her front yard for advice. Should she run away? She resolves to think it over and decide in the morning.

That same evening, a man in a yellow suit comes by and engages Winnie in a conversation. He wants to know how long Winnie's family has lived in the area and if they know all their neighbors. Winnie has a bad feeling about him, which we learn when the narrator says that Winnie was "suddenly reminded of the stiff black ribbons they had hung on the door of the cottage for her grandfather's funeral." When she tells the man that her family has lived there "forever," he echoes the word *forever*. He tells her that he is looking for someone, a family to be specific. At that, Winnie's grandmother comes out and makes it clear that neither she nor her granddaughter talks with strangers. She is

interrupted, though, by the faint sound of music, which she first heard many years ago and which she describes as “elf music.”

The next morning, Winnie is still unwilling to make a final decision about running away. She decides to go for a short walk into the wood that her family owns but that she has never before bothered to explore. She will decide once she gets there if she’s ever coming back. Soon, she comes upon Jesse Tuck taking a drink of water from a natural spring. He notices her and calls her out of her hiding place. When Winnie tries to drink from the same spring, he tries to stop her. To Jesse’s relief, Mae and Miles Tuck arrive on horseback. Thinking quickly, the family kidnaps Winnie to prevent her from drinking the water from the spring. Winnie is scared and confused. Why is this nice family taking her away? Why wouldn’t they let her drink from the spring? As Winnie is taken away by the Tucks, she sees the man in the yellow suit.

When they stop by a stream for a break, Winnie begins to cry. Mae Tuck reaches into her pocket for her music box, and when it starts to play, it calms Winnie. She decides that “no one who owned a thing like this could be too disagreeable.” It is then that the Tucks tell her their story. Eighty-seven years before, the Tuck family had become immortal by drinking water from the magical spring. They didn’t know it immediately, but they found out that the water would keep them alive—at the age they were the day they drank it—forever. They will stop at nothing to prevent others from enduring the same fate.

Even though she is not sure whether or not to believe them, Winnie agrees to go home with them until they figure out what to do. Unbeknownst to the whole group, the man in the yellow suit has heard the whole story. When they arrive at the Tucks' house, Winnie meets Mae's husband, Angus Tuck.

Winnie becomes fond of the Tucks as they set out to teach her why it is so important that no one find out about the spring. Each one tries to show her that eternal life is a terrible burden. In the meantime, the man in the yellow suit shows up at the Fosters' door with a deal in mind. He will get Winnie back in exchange for ownership of their wood. Desperate to get Winnie back, her parents agree.

When the man in the yellow suit tells the constable about the deal he's struck with the Fosters, the constable is a little suspicious, but he follows the man to the Tucks, anyway. The man in the yellow suit arrives before the constable, however, and confronts the Tucks with his knowledge. He tells them that his plan is to let the whole world know of this fountain of youth, but that he will only sell the water to people "worthy" of it. He even suggests using the Tucks as examples of the water's effects. The Tucks are outraged at the prospect of being treated like "freaks." The man in the yellow suit takes hold of Winnie and threatens to make her drink the spring water if they refuse to cooperate with him. Mae Tuck grabs Angus's gun and hits the man in the yellow suit over the head with it. The man falls to the ground unconscious.

The constable arrives just in time to see what Mae has done. The Tucks and Winnie try to explain that Mae struck him because he had threatened to take Winnie from them. The constable takes Mae into custody and explains that if the man dies, she will go to the gallows (a structure from which criminals are executed by hanging). At that moment, they realize what will happen if Mae is sent to the gallows. When she doesn't die, the whole world will understand that she can't die and the secret will be out.

The constable returns Winnie to her family. Later she learns that the man in the yellow suit has died. Winnie decides that she must help; she cannot let Mae go to the gallows. The next day Jesse tells her about their plan to help Mae escape at midnight. Jesse also gives Winnie a little bottle of the spring water. He tells her to think about drinking it when she turns seventeen so that they can get married and be together forever.

Before Jesse leaves, Winnie volunteers to help with Mae's escape from jail. At midnight, Winnie sneaks out of her house and meets the Tucks at the prison. Together, they pry off the window frame of the cell so that Mae can get out and Winnie can crawl inside. Winnie then takes Mae's place.

Winnie waits through the night in the cell, hiding under the cot blanket until the constable discovers her in the morning. Although everyone is upset with her, she feels proud of what she has done. She has rescued the Tucks and helped save the world from the dangers and disappointments of eternal life.

In the final chapter, Winnie finds that some people look at her differently now. Because she got into trouble, people are more interested in her.

The book ends with an epilogue in which the Tucks pull into Treetop many years in the future. They learn that the wood has long since been bulldozed and that Winifred Foster has died two years before. They feel sad for Jesse, but they are satisfied that Winnie had decided to live her life as it should be lived, with an end in sight.

### **Thinking about the plot**

- Why is it important for Winnie to understand why she must keep the Tucks' secret?
- How does Winnie's life change through her experiences?
- How do Winnie's decisions affect the outcome of the book?